GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:201
ANSWERED ON:07.08.2006
STREAMLINING OF PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM
Rawat Prof. Rasa Singh;Rawat Shri Kamla Prasad

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any scheme to further streamline the Public Distribution System (PDS) for strengthening it;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any committee has been constituted for the said purpose;

(d) if so, the details thereof indicating the terms of reference of the said committee; and

(e) the time by which it is likely to submit its report?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a), (b), (c), (d) & (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO. 201 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 07.08.2006 IN THE LOK SABHA.

(a) & (b): The Streamlining of the Public Distribution System (PDS) to improve its efficiency, accountability and effectiveness is an ongoing process. The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State Governments wherein the Central Government is responsible for procurement of foodgrains, storage, their transportation upto the Principal Distribution Centres of Food Corporation of India (FCI) and delivery at prevailing Central Issue Prices, and the State Governments are responsible for identification of beneficiaries, issue them ration cards and distribute foodgrains through a vast network of 4.86 lakh Fair Price Shops scattered all over the country.

The Government has had several rounds of meetings with the State Governments, Fair Price Shop Dealers Federation, and Members of Parliament for strengthening of the PDS in the country. After consultation at various levels, the Government has issued instructions to the States to undertake a campaign for review of Below Poverty Line (BPL)/Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) lists to eliminate ghost ration cards; take action under Clause 9 of the Public Distribution System (Control) Order for punishing the guilty to ensure leakage-free distribution of foodgrains; involve elected Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) members in distribution of foodgrains; display of BPL/AAY beneficiary lists on all Fair Price Shops (FPS); putting up the district-wise and FPS-wise allocation of foodgrains on the websites; ensure timely availability of foodgrains at FPS level; training of members of the FPS level Vigilance Committees; and computerization of PDS operations to ensure transparency in the system.

(c), (d) & (e): The Hon`ble Supreme Court on 12.7.2006 has passed an interim order to `constitute a Central Vigilance Committee, headed by a retired Judge of the Court to be assisted by Dr. M.C. Saxena, the Commissioner earlier appointed by the Supreme Court..... The Committee shall look into the maladies which are affecting the proper functioning of the system and also suggest remedial measures. For this purpose, the Committee shall, amongst other things, focus on:

(a) The mode of appointment of the dealers.

(b) The ideal commission or the rates payable to the dealers, and

(c) Modalities as to how the Committees already in place, can function better.

(d) Modes as to how there can be transparency in allotment of the food stock to be sold at the shops.

While dealing with the question of the mode of appointment, the Committee shall also suggest as to a transparent mode in the selection of the dealers. The Committee shall also indicate as to how more effective action can be taken on the report of the vigilance Committees already appointed. It goes without saying that the same shall be in addition to the legal remedies available to any citizen in setting law into motion..... The Committee would invite suggestions from general public, organizations and would consider the suggestions, if any received, in the proper perspective.

We request the Committee to give its report within a period of four months so that further instructions/directions can be given .....
This direction is initially given for the Government of Delhi to be followed on all India basis.`